

Proclamation 6383 of November 27, 1991

National Adoption Week, 1991

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Adoption is a wonderful act of love, generosity, and lifelong commitment—virtues that have always gone hand in hand with building a family. This week, we acknowledge the many rewards that adoption holds for children, for parents, and for our Nation.

More than 50,000 American children are adopted each year. These youngsters are as eager to give love as they are to gain permanent homes and families of their own. Indeed, any adult who has been blessed with an adopted child or grandchild knows what tremendous affection and joy that youngster brings to the lives of others.

Although the actual process may include moments of anticipation, frustration, and worry, adoption benefits each of the parties involved—including the biological mother who, for whatever reason, cannot keep her child and courageously decides to give him or her the chance to enjoy life in a secure, loving environment. Because strong, loving families are the foundation of stable, caring communities and nations, adoption also enriches our entire country.

Tragically, however, despite the many benefits of adoption, thousands of children continue to wait. Approximately 36,000 children in the United States who are legally available for adoption are living in foster care or in institutions. Many of these children are characterized as special needs children: older children and children with disabilities, children with siblings who need to be adopted by the same family, or members of a minority group. Regardless of the individual needs they may have, all of these children long for the kind of permanent homes and loving families that most of us have always been able to take for granted.

As a Nation, we have begun to dismantle legal, financial, and attitudinal barriers to adoption. This progress has been made possible, in large part, by the vigorous efforts of concerned public officials, parents, social workers, attorneys, counselors, members of the clergy, and others. However, because every child deserves the special love and support that only a family can provide, we still have much work to do. We must continue to promote public awareness of adoption and to find ways of bringing prospective parents together with the thousands of children who continue to wait. We must also continue to offer encouragement and assistance to those courageous women who, despite the pressures of a crisis pregnancy, reject abortion and choose life for their unborn children.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 207, has designated the week of November 24 through November 30, 1991, as "National Adoption Week" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this occasion.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of November 24 through No-

ember 30, 1991, as National Adoption Week. I urge all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 27 day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6384 of December 2, 1991

Geography Awareness Week, 1991 and 1992

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Coaches know that, before a winning team can prove itself on the field, each of its members must master the "fundamentals." The same principle applies to education; thus, our efforts to restore excellence in our schools include renewed emphasis on the basics. One of the key aims of AMERICA 2000, our strategy to achieve our National Education Goals, is to ensure that this country's students demonstrate competence in five core subject areas: mathematics, science, English, history, and geography. The study of geography, which focuses on people and their physical surroundings, not only goes hand in hand with the study of history and science but also gives us a better understanding of current world events.

Geography has been a determining factor in the social, economic, and political development of every nation on Earth; indeed, it is impossible to understand history without taking into account the location, natural resources, and other geographic characteristics of nations. When we study the geography of our 50 States, as well as the relationship of America to the world as a whole, we gain a better understanding of our Nation's history and development—and a deeper appreciation of its diversity and splendor.

While most geographic features of our Nation and the planet have taken shape over thousands of years, the study of geography gives us more than insight into the past; it also equips us with knowledge that we need to understand and to participate in the world of today. As advances in technology bring the world closer together, and as democratic reforms in many nations create new opportunities for international trade and travel, the mastery of geography becomes increasingly important. If the United States is to remain a leader in our rapidly changing world, then our citizens must be able to recognize the location and the significance of events abroad. If we are to continue to enjoy success in the complex realms of foreign policy and international commerce, then we must also be familiar with the languages, customs, and physical circumstances of our neighbors around the globe.

Despite the importance of geography, and despite the fact that it can be both fascinating and fun for students, too many Americans do not have basic knowledge in this field. Too many schoolchildren—and too many adults—are unable to locate major cities, countries, or even entire con-